IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of optical character recognition (OCR) of a character image the method comprising the steps of:

receiving the character image represented at a first spatial resolution;

creating a reduced-resolution version of the character image received in said receiving step, the reduced-resolution version of the character image being represented at a second spatial resolution lower than the first spatial resolution;

~~identifying an optimal OCR parameter for OCR processing of the received character image represented at the first resolution, by~~ executing OCR processing ~~for~~ on the reduced resolution version of the character image represented at the second spatial resolution so as to identify an optimal OCR parameter for OCR processing of the character image represented at the first spatial resolution; and

OCR processing the character image represented at the first spatial resolution ~~with~~ utilizing the optimal OCR parameter identified in said ~~identifying~~ executing step so as to acquire a character code corresponding to the character image.

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said ~~identifying step comprises the steps of~~ executing step identifies the optimal OCR parameter according to steps comprising:

providing a plurality of sets of at least one parameter;

~~identifying each confidence level of character-recognition by~~ executing OCR processing ~~of~~ on the reduced-resolution version of the character image with each set of the at least one parameter so as to identify each confidence level of character-recognition; and

selecting the optimal OCR parameter based on the confidence levels identified.

3. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 2, wherein said selecting step comprises selecting the optimal OCR parameter corresponding to a highest confidence level from a plurality of the confidence levels identified.

4. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 2, wherein said selecting step comprises selecting the optimal OCR parameter corresponding to a confidence level exceeding a threshold.

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said creating step creates the reduced-resolution version of the character image by calculating an average of at least one value of a plurality of pixels of the character image represented at the first spatial resolution.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

judging whether a confidence level of character recognition by said OCR processing step is acceptable; and

repeating said ~~identifying~~ executing step and said OCR processing step if the confidence level is not acceptable.

8. (Currently Amended) Previously Presented) A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer ~~readable~~ executable program code embodied therein for optical character recognition (OCR) for a character image, the computer program product comprising computer ~~readable~~ executable program code configured to:

receive the character image represented at a first spatial resolution;

create a reduced-resolution version of the character image received in said receiving step, the reduced-resolution version of the character image being represented at a second spatial resolution lower than the first spatial resolution;

~~identify an optimal OCR parameter for OCR processing of the received character image represented at the first resolution, by executing~~ execute OCR processing ~~for~~ on the reduced resolution version of the character image represented at the second spatial resolution so as to identify an optimal OCR parameter for OCR processing of the character image represented at the first spatial resolution; and

OCR process ~~processing~~ the character image represented at the first spatial resolution ~~with~~ utilizing the optimal OCR parameter identified in said ~~identifying~~ execution step so as to acquire a character code corresponding to the character image.

9. (Currently Amended) The computer program product according to Claim 8, wherein said computer ~~readable~~ executable program code configured to execute OCR processing so as to identify an optimal OCR parameter is further configured to:

provide a plurality of sets of values of at least one parameter;

execute ~~identify each confidence level of character-recognition by executing~~ OCR processing ~~of~~ on the reduced-resolution version of the character image with each set of the at least one parameter so as to identify each confidence level of character-recognition; and

select the optimal OCR parameter based on the confidence levels identified.

10. (Currently Amended) The computer program product according to Claim 9, wherein said computer ~~readable~~ executable program code configured to select is further configured to select the optimal OCR parameter corresponding to a highest confidence level from a plurality of the confidence levels identified.

11. (Currently Amended) The computer program product according to Claim 9, wherein said computer ~~readable~~ executable program code configured to select is

further configured to select the optimal OCR parameter corresponding to a confidence level exceeding a threshold.

12. (Currently Amended) The computer program product according to Claim 8, wherein said computer ~~readable~~ executable program code configured to create is further configured to create the reduced-resolution version of the character image by calculating an average of at least one value of a plurality of pixels of the character image represented at the first spatial resolution.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) The computer program product according to Claim 8, further comprising computer ~~readable~~ executable program code configured to:

judge whether a confidence level of character recognition is acceptable; and

repeat said ~~identifying~~ execution step and said OCR processing step if the confidence level is not acceptable.

15. (Currently Amended) A system for optical character recognition (OCR) for a character image, the system comprising:

a downsampler having an input for receiving the character image represented at a first spatial resolution, the downsampler for producing and providing at an output thereof a reduced-resolution version of the character image responsive to the first

spatial resolution representation of the character image received at the downsampler input, the reduced resolution version of the character image being represented at a second spatial resolution lower than the first spatial resolution; and

a character-recognition engine for optical character recognition (OCR) processing of an image, said character-recognition engine having a first input coupled to the downsampler output for receiving the reduced-resolution version of the character image and a second input for receiving the character image represented at the first spatial resolution, the character-recognition engine being constructed to:

execute ~~identify an optimal OCR parameter for OCR processing of the received character image represented at the first resolution, by executing~~ OCR processing ~~for~~ on the reduced resolution version of the character image represented at the second spatial resolution received at the first input so as to identify an optimal OCR parameter for OCR processing of the character image represented at the first spatial resolution;

OCR process the character image received at the second input ~~with~~ utilizing the optimal OCR parameter identified in said ~~identifying~~ execution step so as to acquire a character code corresponding to the character image, and

provide the acquired character code at a first output coupled to a system output.

16. (Currently Amended) The system according to Claim 15, wherein the character-recognition engine identifies the optimal OCR parameter by executing OCR

processing of on the reduced resolution version of the character image with each set in a plurality of sets of parameters.

17. (Previously Presented) The system according to Claim 16,

wherein the character-recognition engine performs character-recognition responsive to each set in the plurality of sets of parameters and provides a corresponding recognition confidence level for each of the sets; and

wherein the system further comprises a parameter identifier having a first input for receiving the recognition confidence level for each of the sets, and a second input for receiving each set in the plurality of sets of parameters, the parameter identifier for selecting and providing at an output thereof each set of parameters and its corresponding recognition confidence level.

18. (Previously Presented) The system according to Claim 17, wherein the parameter identifier selects an additional set of parameters responsive to a threshold confidence level.

19. and 20. (Cancelled)